

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1-17. (Canceled).

18. (Withdrawn) A peptide composition comprising:

- (a) an isolated polyprotein NS3/NS4 of the hepatitis C virus and
- (b) an isolated polypeptide NS5b of the hepatitis C virus.

19. (Withdrawn) The peptide composition according to claim 18, wherein said NS3 and/or NS4 and/or NS5b originate from viruses of different genotypes.

20. (Withdrawn) The peptide composition according to claim 18, wherein said NS3, NS4 and NS5b originate from a virus of the same genotype.

21. (Currently Amended) An expression vector comprising into which is inserted only two nucleotide sequences originating from the hepatitis C virus which consist of:

(a) a nucleotide sequence coding for the a polyprotein NS3/NS4 of the hepatitis C virus, placed under regulatory elements sufficient for its expression, and

(b) a nucleotide sequence coding for the a polypeptide NS5b of the hepatitis C virus, placed under and

(c) the means the regulatory elements necessary to the its expression of said nucleotide sequences.

22. (Previously Presented) The expression vector according to claim 21, wherein the nucleotide sequences code for a polyprotein and a polypeptide originating from viruses of different genotypes.

23. (Previously Presented) The expression vector according to claim 21, wherein the nucleotide sequences code for a polyprotein and a polypeptide originating from a virus of the same genotype.

24. (Previously Presented) The expression vector according to claim 21, wherein said expression vector is an adenovirus.

25. (Previously Presented) The expression vector according to claim 24, wherein the genome of the adenovirus is modified so as to replace the E1 region by the expression cassette CMV-NS3-NS4 and to replace the E3 region by the expression cassette SV40-NS5b.

26. (Previously Presented) The expression vector according to claim 21, wherein said expression vector is a poxvirus.

27. (Previously Presented) The expression vector according to claim 26, wherein the genome of the poxvirus is modified so as to insert the expression cassette ph5r-NS3-NS4 and to insert the expression cassette p7.5- NS5b.

28. (Previously Presented) A microorganism or host cell transformed by an expression vector as defined in claim 21.

29. (Currently Amended) A method for the inhibition, prevention or control of an infection caused by hepatitis C virus in an animal, wherein said method comprises administering to an animal in need thereof:

(a) ~~a peptide composition comprising an isolated polyprotein NS3/NS4 of the hepatitis C virus and an isolated polypeptide NS5b of the hepatitis C virus;~~

(b) ~~an expression vector comprising according to claim 21(i) a nucleotide sequence coding for the polyprotein NS3/NS4 of the hepatitis C virus, (ii) a nucleotide sequence coding for the polypeptide NS5b of the hepatitis C virus, and (iii) the means necessary to the expression of said nucleotide sequences;~~

(e)-(b) an expression vector comprising for expression of a nucleotide sequence coding for the polyprotein NS3/NS4 of the hepatitis C virus and an expression a vector comprising for expression of a nucleotide sequence coding for the polypeptide NS5b of the hepatitis C virus; or

(d)-(c) an expression vector comprising for expression of nucleotide sequences coding for the polyprotein NS3/NS4 of the hepatitis C virus and the polypeptide NS5b of the hepatitis C virus placed under the control of elements necessary to an expression constitutive of and/or inducible from said polyprotein NS3/NS4 of the hepatitis C virus and said polypeptide NS5b of the hepatitis C virus.

30. (Withdrawn) A pharmaceutical composition comprising a vaccine, wherein said vaccine comprises:

(a) a peptide composition comprising an isolated polyprotein NS3/NS4 of the hepatitis C virus and an isolated polypeptide NS5b of the hepatitis C virus;

(b) an expression vector comprising (i) a nucleotide sequence coding for the polyprotein NS3/NS4 of the hepatitis C virus, (ii) a nucleotide sequence coding for the polypeptide NS5b of the hepatitis C virus, and (iii) the means necessary to the expression of said nucleotide sequences; or

(c) an expression vector comprising a nucleotide sequence coding for the polyprotein NS3/NS4 of the hepatitis C virus and an expression vector comprising a nucleotide sequence coding for the polypeptide NS5b of the hepatitis C virus.

31. (Withdrawn) The pharmaceutical composition according to claim 30, wherein said pharmaceutical composition further comprises a pharmaceutically appropriate vehicle.

32. (Currently Amended) A pharmaceutical kit comprising a vaccine, wherein said vaccine comprises:

(a) at least one expression vector comprising for expression of a nucleotide sequence coding for the polyprotein NS3/NS4 of the hepatitis C virus; and

(b) at least one expression vector comprising for expression of a nucleotide sequence coding for the polypeptide NS5b of the hepatitis C virus.

33. (Withdrawn) A pharmaceutical kit comprising a vaccine, wherein said vaccine comprises:

(a) at least one adenoviral expression vector comprising a nucleotide sequence coding for the polyprotein NS3/NS4 of the hepatitis C virus, a nucleotide sequence coding for the polypeptide NS5b of the hepatitis C virus, and the means necessary to the expression of said nucleotide sequences; and

(b) at least one poxviral expression vector comprising a nucleotide sequence coding for the polyprotein NS3/NS4 of the hepatitis C virus, a nucleotide sequence coding for the polypeptide NS5b of the hepatitis C virus, and the means necessary to the expression of said nucleotide sequences.

34. (Currently Amended) A pharmaceutical kit comprising a vaccine, wherein said vaccine comprises:

(a) at least one of the following expression vectors:

(i) ~~an expression vector according to claim 21 comprising a nucleotide sequence coding for the polyprotein NS3/NS4 of the hepatitis C virus, a nucleotide sequence coding for the polypeptide NS5b of the hepatitis C virus, and the means necessary to the expression of said nucleotide sequences; and~~

(ii) an expression vector ~~comprising for expression of~~ a nucleotide sequence coding for the polyprotein NS3/NS4 of the hepatitis C virus and an expression vector ~~comprising for expression of~~ a nucleotide sequence coding for the polypeptide NS5b of the hepatitis C virus; and

(b) at least one of the following compositions:

(i) a peptide composition comprising an isolated polyprotein NS3/NS4 of the hepatitis C virus and an isolated polypeptide NS5b of the hepatitis C virus, and

(ii) a composition comprising an isolated nucleotide sequence coding for the polyprotein NS3/NS4 of the hepatitis C virus and for the polypeptide NS5b of the hepatitis C virus.

35. (Withdrawn) The peptide composition according to claim 20, wherein said NS3, NS4, and NS5b originate from a virus of genotype 1b.

36. (Previously Presented) The expression vector according to claim 23, wherein said nucleotide sequences code for a polyprotein and a polypeptide originating from a virus of genotype 1b.

37. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 29, wherein said animal is a human.

38. (New) A method of inducing an immune response in an animal infected by the hepatitis C virus wherein said method comprises administering to an animal in need thereof:

(a) the expression vector according to claim 21;

(b) an expression vector for expression of a nucleotide sequence coding for the polyprotein NS3/NS4 of the hepatitis C virus and an expression vector for expression of a nucleotide sequence coding for the polypeptide NS5b of the hepatitis C virus; or

(c) an expression vector for expression of nucleotide sequences coding for the polyprotein NS3/NS4 of the hepatitis C virus and the polypeptide NS5b of the hepatitis C virus placed under the control of elements necessary to an expression constitutive of and/or inducible from said polyprotein NS3/NS4 of the hepatitis C virus and said polypeptide NS5b of the hepatitis C virus.

39. (New) The method according to claim 38, wherein said immune response is a cell immune response.

40. (New) The method according to claim 38, wherein said animal is a human.